

## CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS AT THE DAWN OF KINGSHIP IN CILICIAN ARMENIA<sup>1</sup>

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The coming of the Crusaders helped forge an Armenian kingdom in Cilicia, where the Rubenians had consolidated themselves as the ruling family. Their fortunes were invariably bound to those of the Crusader principalities in Jerusalem, Cyprus, Edessa, and Antioch, given their common endeavor and the generally steady political alliances. These ties strengthened through intermarriage, which was very common between the Armenian and Crusader nobility, led to seeking a rapprochement between the Armenian Church and the Church of Rome. In the closing decades of the twelfth century, the dwindling fortunes of the Crusader principalities in the East compelled the Cilician principality to grow more dependant on Rome, even to hope for a new Crusade in the face of rising Mamluk threats and attacks and the ongoing menace of the Seljuk sultanate of Konya—not to mention the Byzantine military efforts to reassert sovereignty over the lands lost to the Armenians and the Crusaders.<sup>2</sup> As the push for rapprochement with Rome intensified, a new and disquieting era in Church-State relations began to unfold in Armenian history.

The preparations for the Third Crusade, sparked by the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin in 1187, could not have come at a better time for Prince Levon II Rubenian (1187-1199). This was the year when his brother, Prince Ruben II (1175-1187), handed the rule of the land over to him and retired to a monastery. Difficult as the times were, they provided a golden opportunity for Levon to seek a royal crown from the West and thereby to become, under the watchful eye of the Armenian Church, King Levon I (1199-1219).

As Cilicia was the gateway to the Latin East and the preservation of what remained of the Crusader states was dependent on Armenian good will, in 1189 Levon received a letter from Pope Clement III (1187-1191) to render every assistance to the Latin army led by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (1152-1190). Since it was customary to receive the crown from either an emperor or the Pope, Levon wrote to the Pope and to the Emperor asking that he be crowned king while the Emperor was in the East. Both recipients of Levon's letters agreed, and a crown was promised by the Emperor because of the help rendered to the Crusaders by the Armenians. It was indeed a great disappointment for Levon when he

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<sup>2</sup> These efforts turned to theologically motivated persecution of Armenians living under Byzantine jurisdiction, especially during the reign of Emp. John II Komnenos (1118-1143) and that of Emp. Isaac II Angelos (1185-1195, 1203-1204).

learned in 1190 that the aged Emperor had accidentally drowned when his horse fell in the river Calycadnus (Saleph) in Cilicia. The coronation had to wait. As a consolation to Levon, Bishop Herman of Münster handed the Latin text of the coronation ritual to (St.) Nerses of Lambron, Archbishop of Tarsus (1153-1198), who was the head of a delegation to welcome Frederick into Cappadocia, to translate into Armenian in the meantime.<sup>3</sup>

As for the Cilician prince, he had some homework to do in making peace with the prince of Antioch, Bohemond III (the Stammerer, 1163-1201), with whom he was embroiled in struggles, and in preparing the Armenian Church to cooperate in the endeavor for the coveted crown from the Catholic West. And there was much to encourage him despite objections from nationalist churchmen in the East.

The initial contact with Rome had been made by Catholicos Grigor II Vaykasēr (1066-1105) who sent a delegation to Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand, 1073-1085), the most remarkable personality in medieval papal history, to seek help to halt the inroads of the Turks and to ask for a pallium to symbolize the fraternal relationship between the two churches. The Pope was sympathetic to the pleas of the Armenians who continued their rapprochement with Rome for a century thereafter, under the successors of Vaykasēr and long before Levon's rise to power as Prince or Baron (1187-1199). The Popes, ready as always to extend their supremacy eastward and aware of the Armenian rejection of the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) and the *Tome* of Pope Leo I (440-461), seem to have been interested more in the differences between the Armenian, Greek, and Latin liturgical practices than in doctrinal details and were at last content with demanding that the Armenians add water to their Eucharistic wine and observe Christmas on December 25. Armenian hierarchs and their delegates nearly always agreed to these conditions but were slow to implement their commitments with every improvement in the Armenian political fortunes. There was also considerable resistance by church leaders in the Armenian homeland to the Pahlawuni Catholicoi who were seen as determined to lead the Church westward for the Cilician rulers' political expediency. Their fears were not unfounded, given the ill-fated Council of Hromklay which convened in 1179 to iron out the Christological differences between the Armenian and Greek Churches (substantially the same as between the Armenian and Roman Churches). The council assembled under the auspices of Catholicos Grigor IV Tghay (the Rash, 1173-1193) who pursued the ecumenical efforts of his uncle, (St.) Nerses IV Shnorhali (the Gracious, 1166-73) and those of the tireless spokesman for the

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<sup>3</sup> Gh. Alishan, *Sisuan ew Lewon Metsagorts* (Sisuan and Levon the Magnificent) (Venice, 1885), pp. 447-449. Arm. text of the Latin coronation rite, pp. 472-475 (apparatus), also D. Dawt'ian, "T'agadrut'ean Ts'esē Hayots' Ekeghets'um" (The Coronation Rite in the Armenian Church) "Vardapetakan" thesis, Ējmiatsin, 2001, pp. 75-91 (recension A), pp. 92-105 (recension B). Alishan thinks that the successors of Levon were crowned with this liturgy. For yet another, shorter liturgy that nonetheless seems to combine elements from an earlier Armenian coronation rite and from the preceding, see Dawt'ian, pp. 65-69 (recension A), pp. 70-72 (recension B). The main manuscripts are cited by Dawt'ian.

party seeking reconciliation first between the Armenians and the Greeks and later the Latins, (St.) Nerses of Lambron.

But when the Greek hostilities towards the Armenians turned into religious persecution after 1179, the Catholicos turned to Pope Lucius III (1181-1185) for help. In a letter carried by a Latin-speaking Armenian envoy, bishop Grigor of Philippopolis, the Catholicos recounted the tribulations that the Armenians were suffering because of the Greeks and solicited the Pope's prayers and blessing, as his predecessors had done. The envoy met with the Pope at Verona in 1184 and after a warm reception they concelebrated the Eucharist. In his overly cordial response, dated December 3, 1184, the Pope asked the Armenians to celebrate Christmas on December 25, to add water to the Eucharistic wine, and to consecrate the holy oil during the week before Easter. The letter was accompanied with gifts: a miter, a pallium, a ring, and liturgical books for the Armenians to follow.<sup>4</sup> When the envoy returned, (St.) Nerses of Lambron was at hand to welcome him. Fascinated by the Latin rite, and upon the request of the Catholicos, Nerses translated substantial parts of the liturgical works into Armenian.<sup>5</sup> These were adopted in part by the Armenian Church, including the service of priestly ordination which came to resemble that of induction into knighthood—with the granting of liturgical vestments and other objects for liturgical use instead of the sword. The existing rite of ordination of priests in the Armenian Church is heavily influenced by the one mandated by Pope Lucius III and translated by (St.) Nerses of Lambron.<sup>6</sup> A parallel development is seen in the episcopal vestment used in

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<sup>4</sup> See Vardan Arewelts'i, *Historical Compilation*, 79; trans. R. W. Thomson, "The Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelts'i," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 43 (1989) 209. For the text of the letter of Pope Lucius III, see A. Balgy, *Historia Catholicae inter Armenos* (Vienna, 1878), pp. 55-56; for the Arm. version of the letter, trans. by (St.) Nerses of Lambron (the letter of Grigor IV is lost), see M. Ch'amch'ian, *Patmut'iwn Hayots'*, 3 vols. (Venice, 1786) 3:142-145. The attempt was as abortive as the earlier attempt of rapprochement with the Greek or Byzantine Church (the Pope died in Verona on November 25, 1185). The Armenians ultimately refused to abandon their traditional Christological position with its attendant liturgical practices.

<sup>5</sup> See Gh. Alishan, *Léon le Magnifique*, ed. G. Baian (Venice, 1888), p. 161; M. Ormanian, *Azgapatum* (National History), 3 vols. (Constantinople and Jerusalem, 1912-1927; repr. Beirut, 1959-1961), § 1020.

<sup>6</sup> Although the origin of the Armenian rite of ordination of priests is attributed to (St.) Sahak the Great, the last patriarch of the Gregorid house (in office 386-438), there were several redactions in the ordination manuals for all the clerical ranks ever since (Vaticanus Arm. no. 3 [13th cent.] places the origin of the rite in the 111th year after the death of the Illuminator. The Armenian Canon Law transmits 55 chs. of canons on the ordination and role of a "country bishop" [Khorepiskopos] in the name of (St.) Sahak [V. Hakobyan, ed., *Kanonagirk' Hayots'* (Canon Book of the Armenians), 2 vols. (Erevan, 1964-1971) 1:363-421]). A cursory survey of manuscripts and published texts compels one to speak more accurately of recensions of the respective rites of ordination. For the most thorough and detailed description of *euchologia* manuscripts, beginning with the oldest in existence, see B. Sargsian and G. Sargsian, *Mayr ts'uts'ak hayeren dzeragrats' matenadararin Mkhit'areants' i Venetik. Hator G: Mashtots - Girk' dzernadruteants'* (Grand Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the Library of the Mekhitarists in Venice. Vol. 3: Euchologion - Ordination Manuals) (Venice, 1966); cf. the detailed contents, beginning with the earliest manual in existence, in Gh. Fogolian, *Mashtots' dzernadruteants' Hayastaneants' Ekeghets'woy est 33 dzeragrats' i matenadarani S. Ghazaru* (The Ordination

the Armenian Church today, as also in the vestment of celebrants of the Divine Liturgy, and in the prayers over the vestments and the prayers of vesting.

When the Catholicos Grigor IV died in 1193 as a result of a fall from his horse, the obvious choice of a successor would have been (St.) Nerses of Lambron had it not been for his outright openness to western traditions that had fueled the antagonism of the nationalist churchmen. Fearing their fury, Prince Levon opted for a young and inexperienced nephew of the late Catholicos who assumed the name Grigor V (1193-1194). Still, to carry through with his plans, it was essential for Levon to have the Catholicos on his side. But the young Catholicos could not be pressured by the Prince, who now sought to get him out of the way. With the treacherous help of John, Archbishop of Sis (later Catholicos, 1203-1221), Levon had Grigor V imprisoned and deposed at a council convened in Sis. (St.) Nerses of Lambron was not a party to these events, and according to the sources, Levon had to write him five times before he would attend. The bishops did Levon's bidding at the council. Attempting an escape from the fortress of Kopitar, where he was held, the Catholicos fell to his death when the knotted ropes came apart (hence his cognomen *Karavej*, "Fallen off the rock").

Disappointed with his prior choice of a young hierarch who could not be swayed, Levon sought the election of the elderly Apirat, age 72, who assumed the name Grigor VI (1194-1203). The aged Catholicos was for church unity with both the Greeks and the Latins.<sup>7</sup>

In 1196 a renewed appeal for a crown was made by the Cilician Prince to Frederick's successor, Henry VI (1190-1197), in Milan and, later, to Pope Celestine III (1191-1198) in Rome. A council was held in Tarsus in the spring of that year to formulate a satisfactory response to the papal demands and to renew the rapprochement with the Greek Church. Levon, who presided jointly with the Catholicos, urged the Cilician bishops to comply with the papal terms, and a compromising statement was signed by twelve bishops—(St.) Nerses of Lambron

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Euchologion of the Armenian Church according to 33 Manuscripts in the Library of S. Lazar (Venice, 1966-1974). See also F. C. Conybeare, *Rituale Armenorum* (Oxford, 1905), pp. ix-xxv and 231-242; Claudio Guggerotti, "I riti ordinazione e la Cilicia Armena," Diss. Pontificum Institutum Studiorum Orientalium (Rome, 1996), pp. 22-27, utilizing Conybeare's A (Venice no. 457, dated 9th-10th centuries) under the signum E, and another manuscript, Venice no. 1657, dated 1248, under the signum Z. Of interest also are Jerusalem nos. 2027 and 2156, dated 1266 and 1370, respectively. The canon of ordination of priests is part of the *Episkoposakan Mashtots'* (Episcopal Euchologion), the manual containing the rites performed by bishops. It is sometimes referred to as *Dzerñadruetan Mashtots'* (Ordination Euchologion) in the manuscripts. When it is combined with the *K'ahanayakan Mashtots'* or *P'ok'r Mashtots'* (Priestly or Lesser Euchologion), the manual containing the rites performed by priests, it is referred to as *Mayr* or *Mets Mashtots'* (Mother or Grand Euchologion). These larger *euchologia* at times include also the *Hayrapetakan Mashtots'* (Patriarchal Euchologion), the manual for the rites performed only by the Catholicos, with the canon for the anointing of kings.

<sup>7</sup> On Levon's choosing the successors of Grigor VI, see Kirakos Gandzakets'i, *History of the Armenians*, 5 (Arm. text: K. A. Melik'-Ohanjanyan, ed., *Kirakos Gandzakets'i: Patmut'iwn Hayots'* [Erevan, 1961], p. 168; Eng. trans., R. Bedrosian, *Kirakos Gandzakets'i's History of the Armenians* [New York, 1986], p. 131).

among them.<sup>8</sup> Satisfied with the tokens of compliance and the promises of union with Rome, the Pope supported the request; and the Emperor, having plans for a new crusade, promised a crown to Amalric (Amaury) of Cyprus and to Levon. In September 1197, the imperial chancellor, Conrad, Bishop of Hildesheim, came to Nicosia and crowned Amalric king of Cyprus. The recent death of the Emperor and that of the Pope notwithstanding, the imperial chancellor along with the papal legate, Conrad of Wittelsbach, Archbishop of Moguntia (Mainz), came to Tarsus bearing the long-awaited crown. Thereupon, the Byzantine Emperor, Alexius III Angelus (1195-1203), rushed a royal crown to Levon just in time for the coronation.<sup>9</sup> An impressive ceremony took place on January 6, 1199,<sup>10</sup> in the Cathedral of St. Sophia. The Western representatives must have crowned Levon according to the Latin rite, handing him a scepter whereby he became a vassal of the German Emperor; while the Armenian Catholicos, Grigor VI, anointed him as king of the Armenians.

The ancient sources compel us to conclude that the coronation ceremony was in two parts, the first in the Latin rite with the papal and the imperial representatives officiating, and the second in the Armenian rite with the elderly Catholicos officiating.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, in a manuscript of (St.) Nerses Shnorhali's *Interpretation of the Catholic Epistles*, penned by the scribe Yakob in 1198, we have the following colophon:

And after [a few] days another journey challenged my Lord and Catholicos of the Armenians, for he was summoned by Levon, who is from the ancients of our nation overlooked by the Seer and [who] now bears the royal title which the Armenians had. He uniquely received the purple robe of the augusts and was anointed like Trdat the Great by the will of the courageous Greek people (*azgin Yunats*) who brought him the crown bearing the sign of the Cross. And he respectfully asked the spiritual Lord Grigoris to come and anoint him with the sanctifying and purifying oil of

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<sup>8</sup> Ormanian, *Azgapatum*, §§ 1056-1058. There can be no doubt that Levon had made certain promises regarding unity between the two churches that enraged the hierarchs in the Armenian homeland. In his letter of May 23, 1199, to Pope Innocent III (1198-1216), on which see Alishan, *Sisuan*, pp. 477-478, one may find the kind of promises Levon must have made earlier, committing the Armenian Church to unite with Rome. See also Gandzakets'i, *History*, 3 (ed. Melik'-Ohanjanyan, p. 157; trans. Bedrosian, p. 121), on Levon's deceptive promises.

<sup>9</sup> Alishan, *Sisuan*, p. 465; cf. Gandzakets'i, *History*, 3 (ed. Melik'-Ohanjanyan, p. 158; trans. Bedrosian, p. 122).

<sup>10</sup> On the date of Levon's coronation, see the summary of the seemingly conflicting testimonies in V. A. Hakobyan, ed., *Manr Zhamanakagrut'yunner, XIII-XVIII dd.* (Minor Chronicles, XIII-XVIII Centuries), 2 vols. (Erevan, 1951-1956) 1:51-52 n. 9. Preference is given to the testimony of the anonymous Cilician historian (on whom see the short note by Alishan, *Hayapatum*, p. 436 n. 1); see also below, n. 12.

<sup>11</sup> For the text of the Armenian coronation rite, see Dawt'ian, "T'agadrut'ean Ts'esě Hayots' Ekeghets'um," pp. 65-69.

anointing (*miwron*) and to crown his head with the seal of the sign of the Cross.<sup>12</sup>

Barring any confusion here between the Greeks and the Franks, the author of this colophon suggests that the anointing was in conjunction with the second crown, that sent by the Emperor Alexius III, which provided the opportunity to have the Catholicos do the anointing according to the Armenian rite.

The Catholicos had yet another role to play at the time of Levon's coronation: to administer an oath of loyalty to the Armenian Church. Given the fact that the Rubenian family was partially Latinized because of the intermarriages with the Crusader nobility, and that certain of the Armenian Church hierarchs and the barons of other leading families were apprehensive when Levon was within reach of his western crown, and more so given the likelihood that Levon was crowned first in the Latin rite, there was sufficient reason to exact from the newly

<sup>12</sup> G. Kat'oghikos (Yovsep'ian), *Yishatakarank' Dzeṛagrats'* (Antilias, 1951), no. 277 (col. 611); cf. Alishan, *Sisuan*, pp. 471-475, idem, *Hayapatum*, pp. 441-443. Other colophons of that year with reference to Levon are: no. 278 (cols. 617-618): "Now, in the year 647 of the Armenian Era [January 31, 1198 - January 30, 1199], when Levon, who is of the Rubenians, assumed the kingship of the Armenians. . ."; no. 283 (col. 624), attributed to (St.) Nerses of Lambron and appended to his translation of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse of John* by Andreas of Caesarea, at the end of several biblical manuscripts, especially Jerusalem no. 1930: ". . . and we were scorned by our neighbors down to the year 647, the year in which Levon of the Rubenians was highly honored as king of the Armenians, pious and triumphant in God, whose reputation of courage moved Henry the Great, Emperor of Old Rome, and Alex of New Rome to crown him with precious jewels in the church of Tarsus, which is shepherded by my unworthiness. . ." (since Lambronats'i died on July 14, 1198, he could not have witnessed Levon's coronation on January 6, 1199. Either Levon was crowned on January 6, 1198 or else the colophon is the work of a continuator; the latter is more likely, see G. Hakobyan, *Nerses Lambronats'i* [Erevan, 1971], p. 356); and no. 285 (col. 631), from a Chrisostomian homiliary penned in memory of (St.) Nerses of Lambron, whose recent death is acknowledged in two colophons in the same manuscript: ". . . in 647, in the tenth year of the captivity of the Holy City of my Lord Jesus [i.e., ten years after the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin in A.D. 1187] and during the reign of the pious and Christ-crowned King Levon of the Armenians. . . remember in prayer the [intended] recipient of this book, the Lord Nerses, who was adorned with divine grace and filled with knowledge, who in this year rested in Christ, that the Lord may make him rest with His saints; also his parents, relatives, and friends who with deep devotion had this [codex] penned for the brightness and adornment of His Church. . ." and "In Christ remember the Lord Nerses who in this year rested in Christ." See also the addition to the chronicle of Samuel Anets'i, *Hawak'umn i Grots' Patmagrats'* (Compilation from the Writings of Historians), ed. A. Tēr Mik'elian (Vagharshapat, 1893), p. 114: "In the year 646 [January 31, 1197 - January 30, 1198] Levon was anointed King of the Armenians, reigning over the House of T'orgom twenty-two years, the crown being sent to him by the two emperors, of the Greeks and of the Franks, with which he was anointed king by the Catholicos of the Armenians, Lord Grigor." Anets'i (d. ca. 1180) did not live to see the end of Levon's reign, the length of which was subtracted it seems from the year of the king's death, 1219. Levon's coronation on January 6, 1199 is based upon the historian Smbat the Constable and other near-contemporary and later, inter-dependent historians: "In the year 647 [January 31, 1198 - January 30, 1199], in the month of January, on the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord, Levon was consecrated King of the Armenians under the suzerainty of the Church of Rome and the Emperor of the Germans. . . . That same year the Lord Nerses [of Lambron], son of Oshin and brother of Kostandin, lord of Lambron, fell asleep in Christ" (cf. Smbat Sparapet, *Taregirk'* [Chronicle] [Moscow, 1856], p. 109).

crowned king an oath of loyalty to the Armenian Church. According to the anonymous Cilician historian,

An oath was demanded of Levon, which was this. They placed the Gospel before him, and this is a copy of the oath: "I, Levon, King of the Armenians, who by the will of God shall be King of the Armenians, do promise, pledge, and swear before God and the blessed Saint Gregory the Illuminator that I shall henceforth be guardian and protector of the Patriarch and of the holy Armenian Church and all her clergy, preserving her at all cost and for her benefit, and to attend to the needs of the Fatherland, its honor and rights, to the best of my ability, by the help of God, in keeping with my knowledge and ability, in the pure, Orthodox faith. So help me God" . . . and he repeats it three times.<sup>13</sup>

The present tense ". . . and he repeats it three times" suggests a continuous practice. Although there is no record of the same oath being administered at later times, it was customary to take an oath at coronation time, which no doubt included allegiance to the Church and a promise to safeguard her well-being—a subject to which we shall return shortly. The first real test of the seriousness of such an oath came quickly. At his death on May 2, 1219, Levon had left an infant daughter, Zabēl, as his only heir. She was proclaimed queen and placed under the regency of Baron Atan of Baghras. Shortly thereafter, bandits assassinated Atan and eventually the regency passed to Constable Kostandin of the Het'umian family, who took his trust seriously by doing away with the pretenders to the throne. When Zabēl was barely six years old, Kostandin offered the throne to the second son of Bohemond IV of Antioch (the One-eyed, 1201-1216, 1221-1233), the eighteen year old Philip, probably in the belief that the alliance would serve as a deterrent to the Seljuk sultan of Konya, Kaikobad (1219-1237), who had earlier invaded Cilicia and whose brother Kaikaus (1211-1219) had inflicted a disastrous defeat on Kostandin's army near the end of Levon's reign. Philip took an oath to be faithful to the Armenian Church and her rites, to make no effort to introduce Latin customs, and to abide by the rules of the Cilician court.<sup>14</sup> Within a year he violated all his promises. Worst still, he smuggled the royal treasures, including the crown jewels, to his father in Antioch. Thereupon the Armenian barons imprisoned Philip in the fortress of Bardzrberd (Tel-Hamdoon) late in 1224 and had him killed by poisoning when his father refused to return the treasures.

In 1226 Kostandin obtained the consent of Catholicos Kostandin I Bardzrberdts'i (1221-1267) and the majority of the some seventy barons to marry his eleven year old son Het'um to the nine year old Zabēl (Het'um I, 1226-1271). The marriage and crowning in Tarsus on June 14, on the feast-day of Pentecost,<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Quoted by Alishan, *Sisuan*, p. 548 n. 473.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 527.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 528.

ended the long dynastic and territorial rivalries between the two leading families. Kostandin made peace with his neighbors, the Sultan of Konya in particular, until the Armenians allied themselves with the Mongols following Het'um's visit to Karakorum in 1254. The several joint victories against Het'um's enemies ended on August 8, 1266, when the Mamluk sultan Beibars invaded Cilicia. Aware of the danger, Het'um entrusted his two sons, Levon and Toros, with the guarding of the country while he set out to seek the help of Abagha, the Ilkhan of Tabriz. The young princes with their army of 15,000 were no match for the Mamluk forces. Toros was killed and Levon was captured in the ensuing battle near Nicopolis.<sup>16</sup> One Mamluk army sacked the coastal cities and another pillaged Sis and set the city to the flames. Many were enslaved and the sacred books destroyed.

Upon his return with a small Mongol army, Het'um was forced to conclude a costly treaty with Beibars in which he ceded several frontier forts. The crown-prince Levon was released and returned to his country, and the aged Het'um retired to a monastery. He died a year later, in October 1270.

Like his grandfather Levon I, the young Levon II (1271-1289) was crowned on January 6, 1271, in the St. Sophia Cathedral of Tarsus. Yet unlike his grandfather, Levon II went to his coronation with much reluctance and after three months of mourning over his father.<sup>17</sup> While we do not have the details of the ceremony, there is good reason to believe that the oath of loyalty to the national Church was administered by the Catholicos of the day, Yakob I Klayets'i (cognomen Gitnakan, "the Scientist," 1268-1286). Fortunately, however, we possess an important oration by Vahram Rabun (ca. 1215-ca. 1290),<sup>18</sup> who was the Chancellor of Levon II. The oration, delivered on the occasion of the coronation of the king whose loyal servant Vahram was, is more a theological treatise on kingship than an adulation of the king. The idea of universal monarchy with the divine right of kings, traced to its Davidic roots, was very vital for the Cilician kings—as it had been for the Bagratids before them. Near the end of the oration the author stresses the ethical obligation of a king to abide by his oath or promise, whether oral or written.<sup>19</sup> At the conclusion he makes special mention of Queen Zabēl (d. 1252), to whose benefaction he attributes his education. The royal support of the Church through lavish gifts and by providing for the education of the clergy surrounding the Catholicos is characteristic of the period.

Additional evidence for the kings' loyalty to the Church is to be gathered from the *T'agaworōrhēk'*, the coronation rite as preserved in the *Euchologia*, the clerical manuals, especially those used by the Catholicos, the *Mayr Mashtots'* or

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 401-402.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 270, 519; Ormanian, *Azgapatum*, § 1156.

<sup>18</sup> Text in *Ararat* 1 (1868) 137-141; 2 (1869) 8-9, 36-39, 49-52, 73-78, 97-101; and also *Ban i Yaytnut'iwn Tearn ew yOtsumn Lewoni* (A Message on the Theophany of the Lord and on the Anointing of Levon) (Jerusalem, 1875).

<sup>19</sup> *Ararat* 2 (1869) 78.

the Main *Euchologion*. Of these, several manuscripts are preserved in the various collections, especially at the Matenadaran in Erevan, where manuscript no. 3822, penned by a certain Bishop Melk‘isēt‘ and dating from the thirteenth century, may be deemed valuable for the period under consideration.<sup>20</sup> Although neither a separate oath of loyalty nor a slot for an oath is found in this text of six folia, loyalty to the national Church is unambiguously clear in the rite itself, especially in the three prayers offered on behalf of the would-be-king prior to his consecration by the Patriarch (*Hayrapet*). The following is the first of the prayers:

O Christ, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Creator of all creatures, Savior of the world, grant us our petition, Lord, and answer with favor our prayer which we offer to you before the sacred altar, that you may keep constant and firm the covenant (*zukhts*) of the holy Church, by giving us this person whom you have newly chosen and called, [NAME], for the kingship and the governance of the House of T‘orgom, to shepherd with care and to safeguard from enemies; that he may keep the universal (*zkat‘ughikē*) Church ever high and crowned with ever new glory, and that he may direct the horn of our faith in firm and steady direction and in righteousness for many days, through the intercession of the Holy Bearer of God, for you are our redemption, refuge, and helper, and to you befits

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The two remaining prayers have some repetitiousness and are equally clear about the king’s obligations to the Church. Note the following from the second prayer: “... Establish him in the pure faith and hold his strength conspicuously high, so as to safeguard your holy, universal [and] Apostolic Church in the Orthodox confession (*ughghap‘ar dawanut‘eamb*). . . .”

Other *Euchologia* of this period abound in new services of blessing items related to practices introduced at the height of the Latin influence. A rare *Mashtots‘* at St. Lazar in Venice, manuscript no. 86, dated 1346/7 and penned probably by a certain Bishop Bartholomew (Bart‘oghimēos, name erased) of Pononia at an unknown location,<sup>21</sup> contains prayers for the blessing of armor and all kinds of weapons used by the cavalry, even banners, insignia, etc. The early adoption of western practices by the Cilician nobility may be gathered from the military code of conduct translated Afrom an old Greek manuscript” by (St.) Nerses of Lambron,<sup>22</sup> as well as from the oration of Yovhannes Erznkats‘i (ca.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. no. 965, dated 1432; no. 958, dated 1473. On these, see Dawt‘ian, “T‘agadrut‘ean Tsesē Hayots‘ Ekeghets‘um,” especially pp. 65-69. See also Jerusalem manuscript no. 2673, dated 1294 (p. 644). Such texts of *T‘agaworōrhnek‘* or *Kanon t‘agawor dzernadreloy* were still being copied at the beginning of the nineteenth century; see Venice manuscript no. 381 (*Mashtots‘* no. 17 [Cat. vol. 3, col. 665]), dated 1807 and penned in Constantinople.

<sup>21</sup> *Mashtots‘* no. 49 (Cat. vol. 3, cols. 347-360)

<sup>22</sup> Alishan, *Hayapatum*, p. 432; Hakobyan, *Nerses Lambronats‘i*, pp. 324-326.

1230-1293) delivered at Hromklay on the induction of the princes Het'um and his brother Toros, the sons of Levon II (1270-1289), into chivalry in 1283.<sup>23</sup>

The most trying times in Church-State relations seem to have been during the intermittent reign of Het'um II (1289-1306, d. 1307) who, as a convert to Catholicism, became a Franciscan friar in 1294, assuming the name "Brother John."<sup>24</sup> The tensions continued to the last year of Het'um's life, culminating with a council convened in March of 1307 in Sis by Catholicos Grigor VII Anawarzets'i (1293-1307), a staunch Latinophile and unreservedly Chalcedonian hierarch of the Armenian Church, who was elected through the intervention of Het'um. Anawarzets'i, along with Het'um and his nephew, the co-regent Levon III (1301-1307), were determined to bring about union with the Roman Church so as to hasten another Crusade, which in turn would prove redemptive for the country's ills because of the Mamluk attacks. No common theological grounds for the union of the two churches were to be found, and the Catholicos showed no reluctance for the Roman demands—tantamount to Latinization of the Armenian Church and adherence to Rome. Anawarzets'i would have had his way had it not been for the increasingly vocal and uncompromising nationalists. His efforts were very divisive and created a great turmoil in the land.<sup>25</sup> Possibly at the instigation of the nationalists, Het'um and his nephew Levon, in the first year of his sole reign, were murdered with about forty Cilician barons in Anazarba later in that year, on November 17, by a Mongol general who, ironically, had been sent by the great Khan to help Het'um against the Mamluks.

Upon hearing of the murders, Het'um's brother Oshin (1308-1320) declared himself ruler of the land and was crowned the following year in the St. Sophia Cathedral in Tarsus. The new king was more zealous than his brother about the union of the two churches, and with the help of Catholicos Kostandin III Kesarats'i (1307-1322) he tried to force the nationalist factions to comply with his agenda. He even resorted to imprisoning those who opposed him. An organized protest in Sis threatened to turn into a rebellion in 1309. Unrelenting, Oshin, with the help of the Catholicos, had a church council held in Adana in 1316/7, at which churchmen and nobles agreed to adopt Chalcedonian Christology and Roman liturgical practices, and to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope in a bid for western military assistance. Consequently, the king was poisoned in 1320, and his son and successor, Levon IV (1320-1342), was murdered by anti-Roman factions for relentlessly courting the West.

Hostility towards the Cilician ecumenical endeavors was not limited to the traditionalists in the East, who were appalled at the tendency of the Pahlawuni

<sup>23</sup> Alishan, *Sisuan*, p. 224.

<sup>24</sup> Het'um II reigned intermittently, 1289-1293, 1295-1296, 1299-1301, 1301-1306. On the main issues affecting Church-State relations during his reign, see Ormanian, *Azgapatum*, §§ 1201, 1209, 1214-1220, and C. Mutafian, *Roma-Armenia* (Vatican, 1999), especially p. 169, on Het'um as "B. Ioannes."

<sup>25</sup> Ormanian, *Azgapatum*, §§ 1196-1244.

Catholicoi to compromise the anti-Chalcedonian position of the Armenian Church. Through itinerant monastic teachers and students the hostilities spread as far West as Erznka in the ancient province of Ekegheats', and worsened after the meddlesome reign of Oshin and the no less cruel reign of his son, Levon IV. The old anti-Chalcedonian polemics were revived along with harsh refutations and attacks against Anawarzets'i and Kesarats'i, as is attested in the writings of Movses Erznkats'i (ca. 1250-1325).<sup>26</sup>

There being no immediate heirs to succeed Levon IV, the throne went to his cousin, Guy Lusignan (1342-1344), called Kostandin II by the Armenians, the son of Levon's paternal aunt Isabel and Amaury de Lusignan, Count of Tyre and kin to the Lusignan kings of Cyprus. The Lusignan court was thoroughly French and absolutely Catholic, and perhaps altogether insensitive to local feelings in pursuing the efforts to bring about a union between the Armenian and Roman churches. Consequently, the king was killed within two years of his enthronement. The short-lived Lusignan period in Cilician history was rather turbulent (1342-1375), down to the reign of Levon V (1374-1375, d. in Paris, 1393), who on September 14, 1374, was crowned first by a Latin bishop and then, contrary to his wish, by Catholicos Poghos of Sis (1374-1382).<sup>27</sup>

In the eastern provinces, especially at the main religious centers, there was lack of enthusiasm about the Cilician Kingdom from its beginning. The royal title *Amenayn Hayots' T'agawor* (King of All Armenians) assumed by Levon I could well indicate an attempt at healing a schism—if not a claim to something that was more of a *desideratum* than a reality. Prior to the end of the kingdom, it was customary to mention the reigning Armenian king by name during the liturgical services, especially during the Divine Liturgy (in *Vasn khaghaghut'ean*. . . “For the peace. . .”); in the litany of the Liturgy of the Hours (in *Asasts'uk' amenek'ean*. . . “Let us all say. . .”), where nowadays the litany has *Vasn barepasht t'agaworats'* . . . (“For pious kings. . .”); and in the *Andastan* service, the uniquely Armenian blessing of the four corners of the earth, where nowadays mention is made of “. . . *t'agaworut'iwn[k]J K'ristonēits'*” (“. . . Christian kingdom[s]”). After the Mamluks exiled Levon V to Cairo in 1375, an event that marked the end of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, the special mention of the king by name was dropped, giving way to the general petition for all Christian rulers.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, shortly after the demise of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, we find a shifting theology of kingship in the writings of the last great theologian of the Armenian Church in the Middle Ages, Grigor Tat'ewats'i (1344-1409). While at first his interpretation of the symbols of royalty appears to exalt kingship, an

<sup>26</sup> N. Pogharian, *Hay Groghner* (Armenian Writers) (Jerusalem, 1971), pp. 347-349. A. Oghlughian (Oghlukian), *Movsēs Vrd. Erznkats'i: Matenagrakan Hetazōtūt'iwnner* (M. V. E.: Studies of His Works) (Ejmiatsin, 2001).

<sup>27</sup> Ormanian, *Azgapatum*, § 1338.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., § 1347.

exegesis of the key passage shows that his real intent is to show that man, created in the image of God, has all the distinctive marks of royalty, more than appears to be invested in earthly kings. Here is Tat‘ewats‘i’s theology of kingship from his monumental *Girk‘ Harts‘mants‘* (Book of Questions) (Bk. V, ch. 28):<sup>29</sup>

And now, the authority of the king is indicated in four things. First, in the crown, since he is the head and lord of all his subjects. Second, in the purple, since he is of royal descent and kingly-born. Third, in the scepter and the ring, since he is established over and supported by princes and those in subjection. Fourth, the red shoes, since to the extent of giving their blood they are subjugated under his feet. They signify this. And just as they depict the image of the king with crown and with the purple and with the other [things] and they call the image king, in this way, then, the King of the entire universe created man according to His own image. And instead of the purple, He vested [him] in virtue, which is more royal than any vestment. And instead of a crown, He adorned [him] with free will. And instead of the scepter, He established [him] with eternal blessedness. And instead of shoes, He subjugated everything under his feet [Ps. 8:6]. Thus, man is called the image of God in many ways.

Expanding on the tacit point in his description of royalty, Tat‘ewats‘i goes on to cite several other particulars in which man resembles God.<sup>30</sup> Tat‘ewats‘i belongs to the few in his time who still asserted man’s innate capacity to attain a part of the divine good, when many others of his contemporaries—both in the East and in the West—insisted upon man’s natural inadequacy and his need for God’s grace.

In conclusion it may be said that for churchmen, the Church, as the agency of grace, was clearly superior to the State. Yet the priest and the prince divided the world’s government, and hierarchs did not doubt that the former judged the latter. In the age of persecution of heretics, the Church needed the civil sword, as the Armenian Catholicoi did during the Bagratid Kingdom, when persecuting the Tondrakians to the point of annihilating them by the time of the fall of Ani in the eleventh century. The same dependency of the Church on the State persisted during the Cilician Kingdom, an age of invasions and defections to Islam, a period of insecurity for the Armenian Church as the Catholicosate prolonged its sojourn in the “diaspora.” The Church gained much by its alliance with the State, and vice

<sup>29</sup> Tat‘ewats‘i completed his *Book of Questions* in 1397. Composed of ten volumes (*hatork‘*), the work was the first comprehensive manual of systematic theology for the Armenian Church. Numerous copies of the text were executed in the author’s own lifetime, attesting to its popularity. It was published in Constantinople, 1729, and reprinted in facsimile, in Jerusalem, 1993 (see p. 271).

<sup>30</sup> S. La Porta, “Additional Remarks Concerning ‘Man as the Image of God’ in Grigor Tat‘ewac‘i’s *Book of Questions*,” *St. Nersess Theological Review* 7 (2002), pp. 67-84; see especially pp. 69-70, from where the above quotation is revised.

versa. The partnership between the two was mutually beneficial in Cilicia and, on the whole, seems to have been balanced. Whereas the rapprochement with the Byzantines was pushed mostly by the Church and for religious reasons, the rapprochement with the Latins was pushed mostly by the State and for political expediency.

Apart from the traditional trends in Church-State relations, characteristic of Byzantine times and generally adhered to in previous Armenian dynastic periods, there emerged an ever-widening role for the hierarchs of the Armenian Church—thanks to the introduction of western liturgical practices and ceremonial observances associated with chivalry, knighthood, and kingship. Thus the Latin influence in Cilician Armenia was paradoxical in that it strengthened both the State and the Church simultaneously, and the Latinizing pressure exerted by the State was tempered by the fundamentally Orthodox stance of the Church. Although Prince Levon appointed the higher clergy and called their councils even before the dawn of kingship in Cilicia, this did not become a trend with his successors who—at times—tried to do likewise. To be sure, there was occasional meddling of the State in the affairs of the Church. Similarly, prudent Catholicos were able to keep the increasingly Latinized kings of Cilicia within the orbit of the Armenian Church, down to the inevitable demise of the kingdom.

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